



**United States Department of Justice  
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District of Minnesota**

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## **News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **6 people charged, more than 4,900 marijuana plants seized**

Six defendants were charged today in federal court in connection with what may be the largest indoor marijuana growing operation in Minnesota history. Authorities seized more than 4,900 marijuana plants during the execution of 19 federal search warrants yesterday in the Twin Cities.

Acting United States Attorney Frank J. Magill, Assistant Special Agent in Charge Dan Moren of the Drug Enforcement Administration's Minneapolis District Office, and Hennepin County Sheriff Richard Stanek reported the arrests and seizure April 11 after the defendants made their initial appearance in federal court. The executed search warrants resulted in the recovery of marijuana plants at residences in Brooklyn Park, Burnsville, Coon Rapids, Eagan, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville and Maplewood.

"The multiple arrests, drug, and asset seizures that occurred in this investigation are attributed to the outstanding law enforcement partnerships between DEA, West Hennepin County Drug Task Force, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit, United States Attorney's Office, and other participating federal, state, and local agencies," Moren said. "The efforts of today's enforcement operation, orchestrated by the partner agencies, have dismantled a sophisticated indoor marijuana growing and distribution organization infecting our communities with potent marijuana."

"Marijuana grow operations continue to be of great concern to law enforcement," Stanek said. "Public awareness and collaboration within law enforcement are critical to slowing this trend."

Those charged with conspiracy to manufacture 1,000 or more marijuana plants are: Thin Do, 30, Bloomington; Nam Nguyen, 32, Roseville; Thuong Nguyen, 45, Brooklyn Park; Tung Nguyen, 33, Bloomington; Lai Pham, 36, Shakopee; and Sonny Pham, unknown age, unknown address.

According to a DEA affidavit, police learned that Tung Nguyen was operating a marijuana

grow operation at a Burnsville residence. Authorities began surveillance of the defendants in January 2008 and observed them purchasing supplies commonly used to construct indoor marijuana grow operations.

During the executed search warrants in eight residences, authorities recovered marijuana plants, along with other evidence of marijuana cultivation. More than 2,300 plants were recovered at two Maplewood residences; more than 300 plants at one in Burnsville; more than 400 at one in Brooklyn Park; more than 100 at one in Coon Rapids; more than 700 at one in Inver Grove Heights; more than 500 at one in Lakeville; and more than 600 plants at one in Eagan.

At a second Brooklyn Park residence, authorities also recovered in excess of \$31,000 in cash.

If convicted, the defendants each face a potential maximum penalty of life in prison. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge.

This case is the result of an investigation by the DEA, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit, and the West Hennepin County Drug Task Force, with assistance from both the Northwest and Southwest Hennepin County drug task forces, the Dakota County Drug Task Force, the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Unit, the Minneapolis Gang Strike Force, the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division, the Minnesota National Guard, and the police departments of Burnsville, Bloomington, Brooklyn Park, Coon Rapids, Eagan, Inver Grove Heights, Lakeville, Maplewood and St. Paul. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney LeeAnn K. Bell.